



## Lesson Six: Boundaries and Conflicts of Interest

**Method of Instruction:** Lecture/Role Play

**Total Time Allotted:** 1 hour 15 minutes

**Media:** Slides 33- 46

**Handouts:** # 6 (Army Core Values and Ethical Guidelines)

**References:** Army Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program.  
Available online at [www.sexualassault.army.mil/](http://www.sexualassault.army.mil/).

Army Regulation 600-20, Chapter 8 (Revised Final Draft – 12 September 2005). Available online at [http://www.sexualassault.army.mil/files/Chapter%208\\_AR%20600-20\\_w%20App%20G-J\\_12%20Sept\\_05\\_FINAL%20DRAFT.pdf](http://www.sexualassault.army.mil/files/Chapter%208_AR%20600-20_w%20App%20G-J_12%20Sept_05_FINAL%20DRAFT.pdf).

National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Standards for Social Work Case Management, June 1992.

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**Show Slide 33 (Lesson Title Slide)**



### Lesson Six

### Boundaries and Conflicts of Interest

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**1. (5 minutes)** Inform the students of the overview and learning objectives of the lesson



**Overview:** Just as all professionals do, UVAs have ethical guidelines. These ethical guidelines reflect the Army's set of core values--loyalty, duty, respect, selfless-service, honor, integrity and personal courage. These guidelines set forth a model of behavior that connects all UVAs to each other.

Maintaining good boundaries with a victim is part of effective advocacy. Essential to the practice of ethical behavior is a recognition and understanding of basic boundary issues.

This lesson will discuss the importance of maintaining appropriate boundaries within the UVA/victim relationship and how the UVA can identify conflicts of interests.

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**Show Slide #34 Learning Objectives**



**Learning Objectives:**

- Explain the importance of developing and maintaining appropriate boundaries when working with victims
- Discuss possible conflicts of interest when working with victims

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**2. (30 minutes) Presentation**

Pass out Handout # 6 (Army Core Values and Ethical Guidelines)

**Show Slide 35 (Boundaries)**



**Boundaries**

Maintaining appropriate boundaries and consistently and steadfastly behaving within the limits of the UVA/victim relationship are essential to maintain the victim's trust and sense of safety.



**Note to instructor:** Review Handout # 6 in order to lead a discussion on ethical guidelines for UVAs. Remind UVA's of the Army's set of core values and discuss the ethical guidelines for UVAs.

**Show Slide 36** (The UVA's Ethical Responsibility)



### The UVA's Ethical Responsibility

Often, victims will want to extend the relationship beyond the UVA/victim relationship into a friendship. It is the UVA's responsibility to maintain appropriate limits on the relationship.

**Read the Question:** What can the UVA do to maintain appropriate boundaries with a victim?

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**Show Slide 37** (What the UVA Can Do)



### What the UVA Can Do

This can be done by:

- Encouraging the victim to develop a personal support system, which includes family members, friends, and other support services
- Modeling appropriate behavior
- Empowering the victim to make their own decisions and choices
- Empowering the victim to utilize both internal and external resources



**Show Slide 38 (UVA/Victim Relationship)**



**UVA/Victim Relationship**

It is never appropriate to allow an UVA/victim relationship to gradually blend into a friendship. No matter how caring or well intentioned, the UVA's role is a source of support and knowledge; therefore, the relationship must have clear boundaries.

No matter how much it feels like a friendship between equals, it would hinder the victim's healing process if the relationship developed into friendship. A friendship may possibly lead to different expectations of the UVA, which would be inappropriate or considered a boundary violation.

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**Show Slide 39 (Boundaries are Important)**



**Boundaries are Important**

The victim already had a significant violation of boundaries occur during the victimization; it is crucial that the UVA not engage in any behavior that may even subtly blur the boundaries of the relationship with the victim.

Consistently practicing ethical behavior requires vigilance. The UVA must constantly monitor innuendoes, suggestions, offers, opportunities and all aspects of the relationship for signs it is losing its professional focus.



Show Slides 40- 41 (Potential Boundary Violations)



### Potential Boundary Violations

Innocent, but potentially damaging **boundary violations** might occur when/if:

- The UVA forms a personal and/or sexual relationship with the victim or with a member of the victim's family
- The victim asks for personal information about the UVA or the UVA volunteers it
- The victim or the UVA offers an invitation to visit their home
- The victim offers the UVA goods or services, such as a discount at a victim-owned business, or coupons for a dinner or similar entertainment to express appreciation for services rendered
- The victim offers monetary gifts or gifts of value to the UVA
- The victim or UVA extends an invitation to lunch, dinner, coffee, or other occasions purely social in nature



### Potential Boundary Violations

- The UVA volunteers specifics of his/her own history of abuse
- The UVA shares his/her own feelings about CID, the healthcare provider, or the legal process
- The UVA shares his/her own opinion about which reporting option the victim should select
- The UVA shares his/her own personal biases in regards to sexual assault, sexual assault offenders, and any cultural biases the UVA may have
- The UVA begins to support a course of action he/she believes is in the victim's best interest, rather than allowing the victim to make his/her own choices  
(Remember, the UVA is there to **facilitate** the victim's decision-making process)



**Show Slide 42 (Conflicts of Interest)**



**Conflicts of Interest**

A part of maintaining ethical behavior is being aware of any conflicts of interests that may occur that will prevent the UVA from providing appropriate and sufficient support and care to victims.

Conflicts of interest may stem from several different sources. Some of them may include, but are not limited to:

- Having a previous personal and/or working relationship with a victim
- Having a previous personal and/or working relationship with the alleged offender
- UVA assigned to two different sexual assault cases where the victims are friends
- The relationship with the victim will create a dual relationship with the UVA

**Read the Statement:** If a UVA has a former relationship with the victim, it may prevent the UVA from remaining a source of neutral and unbiased support. There is also a risk for the UVA to become emotionally involved.

**Note to Instructor:** Remind the UVA to utilize the SARC to address any possible conflicts of interest.

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### 3. (10 minutes) Large group discussion

Conduct a large group discussion after having read a learning scenario in class involving a boundary issue.

#### Show Slide 43 Learning Scenario

#### Learning Scenario

CID agent Smith has been investigating SPC Brown's case for the past 2 months. The UVA providing advocacy services to SPC Brown makes a follow-up call to SPC Brown. During the call, the victim mentions to the UVA that the CID agent working on her case asked her to the movies two days ago. The victim reported having mixed feelings about the proposal and asked the UVA what to do. The victim then asked the UVA if she wanted to come to her house so they can discuss the issue in more detail since she was thinking about agreeing to the CID agent's offer.

**Note to instructor:** Use the following questions to lead the discussion on the scenario:

1. What boundary violations are involved in this scenario?
2. What should the response be to the victim?
3. Does the CID agent have any ethical responsibility to not violate boundaries?
4. What action can the UVA take to address his/her concerns about the issue?

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### 4. (30 minutes) Small group discussion.

Break group into smaller groups of 3 for role play. Each group will consist of a victim, UVA, and observer.

Have each group role play while instructor floats around room for observation.



**Show Slide 44 (Role play # 1)**



A UVA has been providing advocacy to a victim for the past 6 months. The victim has grown noticeably attached to the UVA. The UVA initially had concerns about the victim's emotional well-being but has seen recent growth of the victim's recovery process. The UVA has initiated closing the victim's case because the legal process is complete. During their final meeting, the victim states that he wants to thank the UVA for such unconditional support and says that he "Couldn't have made it without you" to the UVA. He gives the UVA a gold bracelet and invites the UVA to dinner and says, "I can't accept no for an answer."

**Show Slide # 45 (Role play # 2)**



A UVA initiated a "warm hand-off" to transfer a victim's case because after being assigned the case he realized he was the victim's former platoon sergeant. As part of the "warm hand-off," the UVA arranged the initial meeting with the new UVA and the victim. About 3 months later, the UVA was at the movies and noticed that the new UVA and the victim were sitting 3 rows in front of him.

Reunite the small groups into one large group and lead a discussion about the role plays. Solicit feedback regarding each role in the scenario.

Use the following questions to lead discussion:

1. How did the UVA respond to any boundary issues with the victim?
2. Did the victim continue to feel supported?
3. What course of action can the UVA take if he/she is aware of any boundary issues or conflicts of interest?





**Show Slide 46** (The UVA is Always Responsible)



### **The UVA is Always Responsible**

The UVA is ***always*** responsible for maintaining appropriate UVA/victim boundaries. The victim is ***never*** responsible for monitoring the relationship to determine when boundaries are being crossed.